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ABSTRACT

This study describes the field experience of teaching interns (n=6) who were enrolled in the Cooperative Professional Education Program (CPEP), an alternative education program at Portland State University (Oregon), and addresses the most significant influences in the learning process. The methods employed were observation of field experiences and follow-up interviews conducted over a 5-month period. The interviews were structured with open-ended questions, seeking the sources of influence on observed teaching behaviors. Major components of the CPEP were: a 9-month field experience; an individualized learning plan; weekly seminars; and a support team consisting of the cooperating teacher, university supervisor, building administrator, and university advisor. The information gained from this study indicated that immediately applying content to practice, observing various teaching models, learning about instructional models, and trying out these models in classrooms assisted interns in analyzing and synthesizing multiple models of instruction. This process enabled interns to move beyond imitating single models of instruction and towards creating personal models of teaching. (LL)

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SOURCES OF INFLUENCE ON "LEARNING TO TEACH"

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In the wake of the reform movement focused on education, a closer scrutiny of teacher education has occurred. National task forces, state departments of education, and local universities are examining existing teacher education programs while exploring viable program changes. Several "reform" recommendations for improvement in teacher education programs (e.g., extended field experience, collaboration between school districts and universities, and integration of theory and practice) are components of the alternative teacher education program which is the context for this study. The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the "learning to teach" process of participants in the alternative program, specifically to address the question of significant influences. Once the sources of influence were identified, program components were probed. Knowledge of sources of influence in relation to specific program components provides information essential to structuring the curriculum sequence and field experiences to maximize student learning.

Literature Review

This study responds to the general consensus of literature on teacher education in terms of information gaps and method flaws. The current literature base has been characterized as "fragmented, particularistic, and often cutting corners" (Koehler, 1985). Curriculum and program

requirements are often based on "hunches" rather than research findings. The existing knowledge base of teacher education research leaves many questions unanswered. According to Koehler (1985), research is needed to conceptualize the relationship between teacher education and teaching practice to improve teacher preparation. Studying the prospective teacher during the process of learning to teach can provide information essential to teacher education reform.

This study also responds to a specific focus of teacher education literature, that is, those studies examining sources of influence in teacher education. Although this topic has received ample attention from researchers, there is discontent with findings and approaches. Freibus (1977) describes the trend of field experience literature as the assessment or investigation of the influence of the cooperating teacher. After reviewing the literature describing influences on prospective teachers, Haberman (1983) concluded the cooperating teacher is the major source of influence on student teacher's future skills and teaching styles. There is professional concern about the value of a "single" influence or model for prospective teachers. Zeichner (1980) finds "utilitarian perspectives" result from traditional singular influences. In the present form, traditional student teaching experiences lead to continuation of existing practice through modeling the cooperating teacher without reflection, comparison, or evaluation.

Additional sources of influence which teacher education literature describes are the university supervisor (Lipton &

Lesser, 1978; Zimpher, deVoss, & Nott, 1980); student biography (Lortie, 1975; Silvernail & Costello, 1983); and seminar (Combs, Blume, Newman & Wass, 1978; Feiman, 1979; Goodman, 1983; Zeichner, 1981). Studies of these influences followed the tradition of focusing on only one influence, and yielded conflicting findings regarding the significance or amount of influence. Further research is warranted and essential during teacher education reform.

Methodology

This study's research design responded to Zeichner's (1984) recommendation of directly observing field experiences over a period of time in order to understand the "learning to teach" process. In addition, qualitative techniques were employed to provide a comprehensive picture of the field experience. On-site observations were conducted over a 5 month period and were accompanied by follow-up interviews. The interviews were structured with open-ended questions, probing for the source of influence on observed teaching behaviors. Participants were not provided with written questionnaires or choices of responses, as each participant responded verbally to the questions. The absence of predetermined responses enabled subjects to develop individual responses.

Data were categorized and analyzed using qualitative reasoning. Successive readings and coding yielded categories useful for data interpretation. Data analysis included reading, sorting, coding, and grouping participants' responses from the interview sessions.

Categories emerged from the grouping of similar responses after the first month of the study. Following each observation and interview, data were compared to initial categories. The continual addition of data caused categories to be examined and refined as necessary. McCall (1989) followed a similar data analysis, finding the need to "challenge initial categories" with the addition of new data.

Context of the Study

The interns in this study were enrolled in an alternative teacher education program at Portland State University. Major components of the Cooperative Professional Education Program (CPEP) include a 9 month field experience, an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP), weekly seminars, support team consisting of the support (cooperating) teacher, university supervisor, building administrator, and university advisor (Carl, 1985; Driscoll & Strouse, 1988). The program was developed collaboratively between two local school districts and the university. The school districts and university continue this collaboration through commitment of shared resources, program responsibilities, and ongoing research and evaluation. School district personnel cooperated with the university in seminar presentations, and provided a major source of expertise. A major difference which distinguishes CPEP from other teacher education programs is the integration of traditional methods course content with the yearlong field experience through a seminar format. The simultaneous presentation of pedagogy with the field experience provides

the opportunity for interns to immediately apply "new" knowledge and skills to practice in classroom settings. The program design is similar to recommendations made by Joyce (1988), calling for the study of theory to blend smoothly with practice. Additionally, interns are exposed to traditional pedagogical course content in non-traditional and varied approaches. Interns participate in weekly seminars, numerous observations, meetings with educators, and teach in several schools representing varied socio-economic levels.

Data Collection

Six interns were observed during instruction every 2 weeks for a 5 month period. Data collection for this study began in January and continued through May, the time period when interns assumed major responsibility for instruction. The data collection followed extensive observations of various teachers and other schools. At 5 minute intervals the observer recorded the intern's teaching behavior. The interval recording pattern of 5 minutes was established to reduce observer bias. Following each observation period, an open-ended interview was conducted. Interns were asked to identify the source of influence for each recorded teaching behavior or activity. Categories emerged from the grouping of similar responses, and were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Findings

A total of 330 teaching behaviors from 44 observations

period. During the follow-up interview, interns responded to the question, "Where did you get the idea for doing . . .?", and responses were recorded. Eight categories of responses emerged (see Table 1). In 4 of the 5 months,

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Insert Table 1 about here

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seminars were reported to be the most frequent source of influence on interns' teaching. One hundred thirty-six of the 330 (41%) teaching behaviors were reported as influenced by seminar. Further analysis determined that 96 of the 136 teaching behaviors influenced by seminars were classified as instructional techniques, or specific teaching systems used in lessons, (see Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here

An example of an instructional technique was "the intern was observed walking around the classroom, checking and commenting to students on a handwriting assignment." The intern reported that she was "monitoring the seatwork," and had learned this instructional technique in seminar.

In addition to the instructional techniques, 26 of the 136 recorded teaching behaviors reportedly learned in seminars were classroom management techniques. During a cardiopulmonary resuscitation activity, an intern stated, "I like the way you are counting out loud so we can tell what you are doing." She reported learning specific techniques of positive reinforcement in seminar, and was using them in

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followed by practice, encouraged interns to try out and use ideas learned in seminar in a classroom setting.

Cooperating teachers (support teacher) were reported to be the second most frequent source of influence (16%) on interns' teaching ideas. Classroom routines (established procedures) were the most frequently reported behaviors influenced by the cooperating teacher. Interns had observed the introduction and reinforcement of classroom routines over a period of time and subsequently duplicated the cooperating teachers' routines. During a math lesson, an intern told the students, "Each student will take a turn in telling one correct answer." The intern reported watching the teacher correct math problems with this procedure, and decided to adopt the routine. Although interns were encouraged to develop new routines, the established routines were often accepted as the norm for the classroom by the intern.

Interns reported "self" as the source of 15% of their teaching ideas. During April, the "self" category had the highest frequency of all reported sources of influence. By April, interns had completed seven months of field experience, teaching, and observations. Most interns had completed an extensive period of full-time teaching and were now teaching part-time and assisting the cooperating teacher. Their recent teaching experience and the knowledge gained may have resulted in a sense of ownership of the teaching behaviors and ideas. Another explanation may be that interns found it difficult to separate personal behavior from ideas and teaching of others as they became more immersed in teaching. Finally, after utilizing someone

else's ideas, interns may have integrated the new knowledge with prior learning, and created a "new" personal teaching idea or behavior. Veldman (1970) notes student teachers bring their personal beliefs into the field experience, and rely heavily upon their belief system when learning to teach. All of these factors may have contributed to interns reporting "self" as an influence on teaching. They referred to "self" most frequently as a source of content for subject matter ideas. One intern reported herself as the source for a teaching idea on Shakespeare, as she had worked extensively with Shakespearean literature as an undergraduate student. These interns had not completed education courses prior to the field experience, so the focus on subject matter ideas from self probably could be traced to general liberal arts courses.

Observations in other classrooms and schools were reported as a source of influence on 10% of the interns' recorded teaching behaviors. Subject matter information gleaned from observations of other teachers were the most frequent type of teaching behaviors or ideas influenced by observations. In a first grade class, the intern said, "The little hand is between 12 and 1, so we say 12:30." She had recently observed another first grade class, and reported the teaching-time ideas were obtained from the observation. Numerous observations gave interns increased exposure to various models of teaching.

Additional sources of influence were less frequently cited and included university supervisor (7%), past

experience (6%), previous course work (3%), and teacher's guide or manual (1%).

Discussion

Interns reported multiple sources of influence on their teaching behavior, with seminars most frequently credited for influencing interns' teaching. This result differs from results reported previously in teacher education literature. Most studies conclude the cooperating teacher is the major influence on student teachers (Haberman, 1983). The large number of teaching behaviors and ideas attributed to seminars as the major source of influence may be the result of CPEP design and curriculum. Interns lack educational knowledge prior to entering the program, thus seminars serve a major role in the learning process. The purpose of CPEP seminars was to provide interns with pedagogical knowledge, understanding, and skills concurrent with the field experience. The seminar schedule was designed to present this content in a sequenced curriculum and topics were related to concrete day-to-day teaching. Weekly seminars provided simultaneous presentation of theory and research with daily application and practice. The frequent attribution of seminars as the major source of influence on teaching supports Goodman's (1983) suggestion that seminars be structured to facilitate the development and education of prospective teachers.

In addition to the seminar influence, interns experienced varied classroom influences during the school year. Therefore, they were exposed to a range of teachers and teaching experiences more varied than that of

traditional student teacher. Numerous experiences in varied classrooms may have lessened the impact from a single source (the cooperating teacher), along with creating the category of "observations" as an additional source of influence on teaching. The combination of these factors also lead to interns reporting "self" as a source on influence on their teaching. Lortie (1975) and Veldman (1970) find the student teacher's background to be important in the development of individual teaching style, and interns in this study supported this belief by reporting "self" as an influence in teaching. During a yearlong field experience, interns have more opportunity to integrate personal ideas into teaching.

In this study, as in previous studies, university supervisors have been reported as minor sources of influence. Zimpher, deVoss, and Nott (1980) attribute the minor influence of the university supervisor to the traditional functions of this position (i.e., establishing teaching sequence in field experience or liaison between school district and university). The findings of this study are understandable, as the role or function of the university supervisor might not be interpreted as a direct source of influence on the student teacher's teaching.

The extended field experience, in conjunction with observation and application of numerous teaching models enabled interns to analyze varied models of teaching, and personalize these models of teaching through synthesis and evaluation. In addition, the opportunity to reflect upon models of instruction was incorporated in each weekly seminar session, through presentations, discussions, and assignments.

Conclusion

The information gained from this study indicates a strong relationship exists between teacher education program design and influences on preservice teachers' professional development. Presenting pedagogical knowledge concurrent with the field experience allowed interns to immediately apply content to practice, resulting in seminars exerting the major influence on interns' teaching. Observing various teaching models, learning about instructional models in seminar, and "trying out" these models in classrooms assisted interns in analyzing and synthesizing multiple models of instruction. The process of analysis and synthesis enabled interns to move beyond imitating single models of instruction, and towards creating personal models of teaching.

TABLE 1

REPORTED SOURCE OF INFLUENCE ON OBSERVED TEACHING

	Observations	Self	Teacher	Seminar	Past Experience	Supervisor	Manual T. Guide	Course Work	Total
January	5	6	9	32	5	5	3	4	69
February	14	14	13	24	7	11	0	3	86
March	4	8	10	28	7	6	0	2	65
April	3	13	12	11	1	0	0	0	40
May	8	8	9	41	0	2	0	2	70
TOTAL	34	49	53	136	20	24	3	11	330

Intensive sample of interns n=6

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TABLE 2

CONTENT OF REPORTED SOURCE OF INFLUENCE ON OBSERVED TEACHING

	Observations	Self	Teacher	Seminar	Past Experience	Supervisor	Manual T. Guide	Course Work	Total
Instructional Techniques	8	13	12	96	3	7	0	1	140
Classroom Management	5	5	7	26	1	17	0	0	61
Classroom Routines	7	12	18	7	4	0	0	1	49
Subject Matter	14	19	16	7	12	0	3	9	80
TOTAL	34	49	53	136	20	24	3	11	330

Intensive sample of interns n=6

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